

Present:

Elie Jouen, IE	Gerd Köhler, GEW, Germany
Alain Mouchoux, CSEE	Gabor Szabo, FDSZ, Hungaria
George Vansweevelt, ACOD, Belgium	Patrick Flynn, IFUT, Irland
Hugo Deckers, ACOD, Belgium	Sigrid Lem, NARW, Norway
Jens Vraa-Jensen, DM, Denmark	Hanna Witkowska, NSZZ, Poland
Kari J. Pitkanen, FUURT, Finland	Manuela Pereira Dos Santos, FENPROF, Portugal
Guy Lachenaud, FEN, France	Janez Stergar, ESWUS, Slovenia
Michel Deyme, SGEN-CFDT, France	Malcolm Keight, AUT, United-Kingdom
Hélène Cassimatis, SNCS, France	Paul Bennett, NATFHE, United-Kingdom
Yves Baunay, SNES, France	

Apologies were received from Marc Olivier and Monique Fouilhoux, and from Alain Mouchoux for availability only on 30 September.

1. Preliminary remarks

The Chair welcomed members of the Committee, and reported that the Secretary to the Committee, Monique Fouilhoux was unwell and unable to attend the meeting, and that Elie Jouen, Deputy General Secretary, had come at short notice to represent the secretariat. The Committee sent its best wishes to Monique Fouilhoux. It was agreed to deal with the issues involving recommendations for ETUCE action on the second day of the meeting, when the General Secretary of ETUCE could be present.

2. Report of previous meeting

The report of the meeting of 23-24 March was received and approved, subject to the addition of the word 'not' in the second line of page 3 of the English version (... 'this does not appear'...), the French text being correct. There were no matters arising other than those on the agenda.

3. Report on developments at global level

Elie Jouen reported on the principal outcomes of the EI 2nd World Congress, covering the Executive Board elections, the programme and budget, the resolutions, and the abolition of the Sectoral committees. In discussion, it was noted that there was no-one now on the Executive Board specifically from a higher education union, and also there was no longer a specific structure for higher education. Elie Jouen explained that the former sectoral structure posed problems of representivity and costliness, and referred to the higher education items in the action programme, including the proposed sequence of higher education conferences. These and other activities would be prepared by ad hoc groups, the first of which would meet at the end of the week, to plan a major global conference on higher education in 1999. The chair pointed out the important work that needed to be done on the UNESCO Recommendation on the status of higher education teaching personnel. Reference was also made to the need to prepare for the UNESCO World Conference on Science in 1999. The Committee noted concern at the lack of higher education representation on the Executive, and agreed that their national organisations would need to explore ways of addressing this issue in the period between now and the 3rd World Congress. Elie Jouen reported on the EI participation in the UNESCO Conference on Higher Education to be held in the following week, and the political and logistical problems which had arisen with the conference.

4. Funding

The Chair reported on the ongoing work on funding of higher education and research, and pointed out the need for committee members and/ or their organisations to undertake the work agreed on the various items on the agenda. The committee received the paper on Higher Education and Research funding prepared by the EI Secretariat from OECD sources. After a lengthy debate, the following recommendation was agreed:-

1. The EI Secretariat should circulate to relevant unions, information on the funding of higher education and research from OECD sources, giving an indication of trends, and also drawing attention to the definitions and assumptions which underlie the statistics; member organisations should be asked to comment on the statistics, updating them from national sources, identifying trends, giving examples of the institutional impact of these trends, and analysing the definitions and assumptions from a national trade union perspective (this work in due course to contribute to global-level work agreed in the Washington programme);
2. A group of union experts on funding of higher education and research could help the Secretariat to look at trends and assumptions in the official funding statistics, and to develop EIE's own positions for the satisfactory funding of higher education and research, taking account of social and demographic factors;
3. EI should gather information on trade union responses to the budgetary crises affecting higher education and research, and also make warning statements relating to the dangers for funding of the threatened economic recession;
4. A special study should be made of funding of higher education and research in the central and east European countries;
5. The next meeting of the Committee should receive, as appropriate at the time, either a report from the experts working group referred to above, or a presentation by an external expert speaker, with the opportunity for discussion with them.

In the discussion, the Committee recognised the importance of asserting that money spent on Education is an investment, while acknowledging that the question of private/ individual investment as opposed to public or social investment must be addressed in adopting this position.

5. Casualisation

It was reported that, in spite of the 15 June deadline for questionnaire responses, most of the nine responses had only reached the EI Secretariat in the last week, and others were on their way. It was agreed that any further responses should be sent in quickly, so that the Secretariat can prepare a paper for the next meeting. Committee members referred to the diversity of experiences in their countries, ranging from countries where casualisation is a major concern to those for whom this was not (or not yet) a problem. Where it is a problem, there is often anecdotal rather than statistical information, partly because of the diffused and informal (even illegal) nature of many casualisation practices. Where casualisation is not yet a major problem, as in France, there are official attempts to find ways around the employment of permanent staff with full civil service status. Union strategies which focus on resistance to the conversion of existing full-time and permanent posts to part-time or temporary ones were mentioned.

6. Mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications

Mr Köhler apologised for not having prepared the paper mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting. It was agreed he would prepare a paper in collaboration with the Chair, for the next meeting. It was agreed that this paper should take account of the meeting between the ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom at the Sorbonne this summer, which had agreed proposals for higher education systems based on 3, 5, and 8 year courses. Representatives reported that this proposal was already having a wide influence on policy in a number of countries in both the EU and central and eastern European countries, and was causing problems for teachers' unions. The paper should also look at structural obstacles to mobility, including the pattern of the academic year. Other issues included accreditation and modular courses. Some members of the

Committee suggested that it was possible to find a middle way between the 'harmonisation' and 'mutual recognition' models.

7. Diversification

The Chair reported that no contributions had been received in response to the request made at the last meeting, but that he would attempt to write a paper for the next meeting on the basis of the material available. Committee members were invited to send information and ideas to him as soon as possible. In discussion, reference was made to the different aspects of the diversification process, including growing diversity of the student body reflecting both mass Higher education systems and the transition to life-long learning; the changing relationships of intermediate level and vocational education to Higher education; new structures and funding regimes, including links with or borrowing ideas from the world of business; pressures for money-making activities in higher education institutions; and new forms of institutions.

8. ETUCE work

The Chair welcomed Alain Mouchoux, General Secretary of the ETUCE, to the meeting. The Chair and Alain Mr Mouchoux gave a brief overview of the work of the new ETUCE Advisory Group on Higher Education and Research, which held its first meeting in August, and whose work was described in the most recent issue of the ETUCE Newsletter.

9. Pay and Conditions database project

Mr Köhler introduced his paper outlining the research project being set up by the GEW and the University of Kassel, which would begin to give effect to the longstanding wish of higher education and research affiliates for a database on the pay and conditions of academic staff in higher education. The project would use national reporters, whose reports would be made available to the affiliated unions in each country, and both the researchers and the union representatives would be invited to a conference to review the findings in Kassel on 15-17 April 1999. Following discussion, it was agreed that affiliated unions should be given the details of the national researchers, and the researchers should be invited to make contact with the national unions before they completed their reports during the remainder of 1998, in order to provide the opportunity for the reports to have the fullest information in them. It was agreed that the authority of the project report would depend on the general acceptance of its accuracy, with trade unions having the opportunity to put their detailed perspectives on it afterwards.

10. Professional Development regional seminars

Alain Mouchoux reported that the third seminar in the series would be held in December in Strasbourg, and would involve representatives from France, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Italy. The reports of the first two events would be useful in planning this event. The Advisory Group on 16 October could begin the detailed planning. The Committee welcomed the continuance of this work, and recommended that Professional Development should be included as appropriate in the 1999-2001 Action Programmes of EIE/ETUCE. In this ongoing work, the professional **development** needs of research workers and also the links between professional development and quality issues should be made.

11. European Programmes

Alain Mouchoux outlined recent developments regarding the SOCRATES, LEONARDO and TEMPUS programmes, including the preparations for stage II of each of these programmes. There are continuing problems between the European institutions about the programmes, but SOCRATES and LEONARDO will benefit from a 30% increase in their budgets and a simplification of their procedures. There was a need for more information about the budget increase, and particularly whether it was wholly or partly offset by the inclusion of a number of central and eastern European countries within the programme. Committee members expressed concern whether this inclusion was premature, since it would require those countries to find 50% of project financing.

ETUCE has successfully argued for an Evaluation committee for SOCRATES, but it represents 150 organisations: ETUCE is on the much smaller liaison committee, which may be able to work more effectively. However, formally under Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty, there is no provision for European-level Social Partner involvement in SOCRATES (unlike LEONARDO).. In this aspect as in others, the German election and the further increase in the power of the Social Democrats in the EU, could make possible at least a change in mood and possibly a change in the formal position in respect of Social Partnership in education. Alain Mouchoux reported that there was no Social Partnership involvement in TEMPUS.

Mr Keight tabled a paper proposing a manifesto to be used with candidates in the next European Union elections, and it was agreed that this was a potentially useful idea. Mr Mouchoux pointed out that involvement in the election would be discussed at the ETUCE Executive Board meeting in October, but pointed out that this would be in the context of the whole of the ETUCE membership. The Chair agreed to raise the proposals in Mr Keight's paper at the ETUCE meeting, and said that, as the policy would have to be delivered by national unions, it would be for the unions in higher education and research to decide how they wanted to make their distinctive voice heard. The Committee agreed that the issue of Social Dialogue must be pressed as much nationally as at the EU level. However it was also stressed that the role of the unions in Social Dialogue was to exert as much influence as possible on the decision-makers, not to take over their role.

12. Relations with University Rectors

Alain Mouchoux outlined the difficulties ETUCE experienced recently in forming better working relations with the university rectors organisations at the European level, and asked whether the situation was better at the national level. Comments from all the countries represented suggested that there was a wide spectrum of relationships from very close ones, particularly in small higher education systems, like Slovenia, Denmark, Norway and Ireland. In some systems (Poland, Portugal) different parts of the system had different relations, with less good relations with the rectors of private institutions. In several countries (e.g. Denmark, Germany) close informal relations existed on the basis of continued union membership by a number of rectors - and in Germany, this extended to strong formal and working links as well. In France, relations with rectors were limited by the integration of rectors' organisations into the formal state apparatus. In the UK, there were some good individual relationships, and a mixture of contacts on various bodies as well as through collective bargaining, but generally the Vice-Chancellors were not interested in dialogue with the unions, and in their thinking on 'stakeholders', did not include the unions in this category. In Poland, there were good relations until the reality of budgetary decisions at institutional level exposed their differences. The Finnish experience suggested that, no matter how good relations with individual rectors were, this was no substitute for meeting them collectively. The Chair pointed to the ETUCE experience that the work it had done on Quality in Higher Education in the mid-1990's, leading to the publication of the Bruges Colloquium report, had demonstrated to the Rectors that the unions had something of interest to say: we should recognise that we can only have a meaningful dialogue if we have worthwhile and authoritative things to say.

13. Relations with ESIB

The Chair reminded the Committee of the input to the Committee by an ESIB representative at its last meeting, and Alain Mouchoux reported on a meeting he and Monique Fouilhoux had with ESIB in early September. ESIB are planning a colloquium on the free movement of students and mutual recognition. Also, ETUCE and ESIB plan to publish a joint statement on racism and xenophobia. This work will be carried forward with the participation of the ETUCE Higher Education and Research Advisory Group.

14. Relations with the ETUC

Gerd Köhler raised this issue in the context of the work which ETUC was engaged in as a Social Partner on the issue of casualisation and fixed term work. He emphasised the importance of this issue to the unions representing Higher education and research, and asked that the ETUCE should ensure that the higher education sector's voice is heard. Alain Mouchoux agreed and referred to the survey on casualisation which

the ETUCE had just circulated to its affiliates. This work would be carried forward within the ETUCE by the formation of an ad hoc group.

15. Research

The Chair and Alain Mouchoux reported on the work done in the last week by an ad hoc group within ETUCE in drawing together and editing for publication, the outcomes of the three seminars on research which ETUCE had held: a draft text was tabled, and the Chair reported that he and Kari Pitkanen were doing further drafting work on the text. It would be circulated to all relevant affiliates for comment, subject to agreement by the October ETUCE Executive Board, and a final version should be approved for publication by the Executive Board in December. The Committee welcomed this, and made some comments on the draft. They also welcomed the report by Alain Mouchoux that provision for further research seminars could be considered for the 1999-2001 Action Programme by the Executive Board. A tabled paper by Gerd Köhler on contract research was received, and it was agreed that points from this should be incorporated as appropriate in the text of the research pamphlet.

Alain Mouchoux reported on the 5th Framework Programme on Research, that there was still a conflict between the Council of Ministers, who wanted a budget of 14 billion Ecus, and the Commission and Parliament who were arguing for a budget of 16 billion Ecus. Also, the programme is to cover the accession countries. It is hoped that this impasse will be resolved at the Council of Ministers meeting on 13 October.

16. Quality

The Chair and Mr Mouchoux reported on plans within ETUCE for further work on Quality issues. It was noted that there would be an input from Higher education, in the form of a substantial workshop, within the programme of a colloquium on quality planned for April 1999. It was suggested that the forthcoming EU document currently being finalised by the Council of Ministers would be an appropriate item for such a workshop to consider. It was noted that this document is a recommendation and not a directive. Mr Mouchoux agreed to circulate the paper and the comments made on it to the Austrian Presidency, and to make them available to EI for the Committee. Mr Mouchoux referred to the oral reports he made to the Advisory Group, and the Chair pointed out that the Group had a small membership and was not of itself a communication channel to the higher education and research membership. It was agreed that it would be useful for the ETUCE and EIE offices to liaise more fully on the papers to be circulated to the Committee and the oral reports to be made to it. The Committee welcomed the continuing work on quality in higher education being done within ETUCE, and suggested that it would be helpful if a colloquium on quality in higher education and research could be included in the relevant Action Programme for 1999-2001.

17. Copyright

Mr Mouchoux referred to the work being done by the ETUCE on copyright, and recognised the importance of these issues to members in higher education and research, both as users and producers of copyright material. However, he pointed out the resource demands that this area of work made, and said he would be making a report on these difficulties to the next ETUCE Executive Board. The Chair said he was aware of the complexity of the issues surrounding copyright, but emphasised the particular importance of these issues for higher education and research, and urged that the resources were found within EIE or ETUCE to do this work, possibly drawing on the expertise among the membership in these sectors.

18. Future work

Members of the Committee commented on the declining attendance for the meetings of the Committee, and the need to keep the business, timing and length of meetings under review. The difficulties of working within the new structures were also noted.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 March 1999. However, it was agreed that, for the following meeting, consideration would be given to holding it at the end of the week, to see whether members found this more convenient.